

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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APPROPRIATIONS PANEL APPROVES FARMERS' MARKET FUNDING

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the Agriculture Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee has included in its spending plan \$25 million to support the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Hinchey, a member of the Agriculture Subcommittee who strongly advocated for the funding, made the announcement at a press conference at the Old Town Stockade Farmers' Market in Kingston.

"These programs give people who are struggling to make ends meet access to fresh, nutritious food," said Hinchey. "They also help farmers by putting 100 percent of these food dollars into their pockets."

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides low-income women, infants and children with vouchers to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets during the local growing season. The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides the same service for low-income individuals who are at least 60 years old.

"Farmers' markets are assets to their communities," Hinchey added. "They bring people together, provide an important connection with the land, and give city dwellers a sense of where their food comes from. I want to make sure that they continue to thrive so that people in the community have a source of fresh, locally grown produce. These programs make it easier for farmers' markets to flourish."

As a member of the Agriculture Subcommittee, Hinchey strongly supported increased funding for the farmers' market nutrition programs. The \$25 million dollars provided by the subcommittee represents a 25 percent increase over their fiscal year 2001 levels. The Agriculture appropriations bill will next be considered by the entire Appropriations Committee, which is expected to vote on it next week.

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